
MEMORANDUM – OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

TO: SelectBoard
FROM: Carter Terenzini, Town Administrator *Carter*
RE: Village Sidewalk Study
DATE: April 22, 2013
CC: B. Woodruff; S. Kinmond; Lead Petitioners



I am seeking your sign-off on basic concepts we would use to guide the Village Sidewalk Study we are about to undertake. (Article #27 of the 2013 ATM for "...the surveying, planning and designing of a sidewalk or sidewalks in the village area, for the purpose of presenting a plan or plans... for consideration... at the March 2014 Town Meeting.").

Neither the petitioner nor the Town Meeting specified what the "village area" constituted. Believing this meant many things to many people, we held a public session on April 14th so the public could weigh in on what the Village Area might be "... and what the proper boundaries of a study area would be." That meeting was attended by some 30+/- persons.

We opened with a short presentation on our purpose (to identify a study area) and the process from here. We presented comments received in the run up to the meeting (a request to go to Lions Club). We worked from an aerial photo extending along Route 25 from Lincoln Drive to the Village Falls. Blue tape was overlaid upon that photo as people spoke to the East/West and North/South bounds of the study area and possible nodes off of that. Any need to clearly define a yes or no addition or deletion to those lines, or to resolve conflicts amongst the attendees, was done by a show of hands. The end result is attached. There are two caveats, each of which I believe we can address during the course of the study.

- 1.) We were asked to extend the Academy node far enough south to pick up the proposed gym study. We do not yet know exactly where that might be. However, I do believe any area outside that shown could be picked up in that study when they look at the internal SAU circulation;
- 2.) We were asked to include the "Old Range Road and Path" by the pond and back up to the Library. We have extended the line to where we think this is.

The second of these suggestions poses an interesting dilemma as it envisions routes not directly adjacent to or along the side of a roadway. What is a sidewalk? The web's Free Dictionary would define it as "A paved walkway along the side of a street." Webster's would define it as a "...a *usually* paved walk for pedestrians at the side of a street..." while a third source would say it is "...a hard-surfaced path for pedestrians alongside *and a little higher than* a road...". As we need agree upon the study area boundaries so too do we need to agree upon what a sidewalk is.

Sidewalks for the purposes of this study shall mean:

A designated walkway for pedestrians to travel from a point of origin to a point of destination within the study area by means of:

- (a) A hard surfaced way alongside a roadway separated vertically (i.e. raised curb) or horizontally (i.e. a 5' +/- buffer panel) from the roadway;

Or

- (b) A pathway suitable for pedestrian travel and capable of being maintained in the majority of local weather conditions.

Finally, there comes the matter of the width of these “sidewalks”. Many people envision them as narrow as three feet in width while others think in terms of five feet. These standards are considered inadequate by most people who study the issue of “walkability”.

From the Safe Routes to Schools manual (which suggests a 5' to 6" width) we read that “Walking can be a social activity; facilities are needed to accommodate social walking. The six-foot width allows for two people to walk comfortably side by side and provides sufficient space for pedestrians crossing in the opposite direction.” The ASHTO Green Book (Association of State Highway and Traffic Officials) suggests that the minimum width for a sidewalk along a arterial or major street should be 6' to 8'. While alongside “...parks, schools, and other major pedestrian generators...” it should be 8' to 10' in width. The Town Planner would recommend the wider 8' width. We have settled upon the narrower 6' width. We recommend that ...

Sidewalk widths for the purposes of this study shall be a minimum of 6'. This is – as ASHTO recommends – intended to be the “...clear or unobstructed width.” “When that is not possible, sidewalk furnishings and other obstructions should be located consistently so that there is a clear travel zone for pedestrians with vision impairments and a wider sidewalk should be provided to accommodate this line of obstructions.”

The proposed study area is shown on the attached map. You find overlaid upon the proposed study area the Village District as it is established in the zonign ordinance.

We seek your approval of the recommendations in this memorandum as the guidance for the Task Order we shall next bring you from the Town Engineer.